sels of his ancestor, neglected commerce altogether, and was the scholar and the statesman only. Brought up with Politian and Pic de la Mirandola, a poet and a gentleman excelling in every bodily exercise, ugly as Socrates and seducing as Alcibiades, sagacious as a statesman, irresistible as a negociator, he served his country when threatened by a general coalition, raised it to its former power, gained over all the courts of Italy by the mildness of his domination, made them live for fifteen years in a state of profound repose, which Italian historians have termed the golden age of their country, wrote exquisite verses, caused the most precious Greek and Latin manuscripts, the finest antique statues, to be searched for and discovered, throughout the whole of Europe, gave to the world Michelangelo, charmed and dazzled by his magnificence the Italian Princes whom he had attracted to Florence in the interests of the general concord, thought of every thing except his fortune, which he lavished, compromised, but so notoriously for the general interest, that Florence gratefully declared the treasury of the Medicis and that of the republic confounded, and at last died, carrying with him into the tomb the prosperity of his country, for the prudence which had created her happiness having descended with him into the grave, the French and Germans fell upon Italy, ravaged it for half a century, and made it what it still remains—a slave.

Would it have been better, had this splendid example of hereditary transmission never existed? Would it have been better that the fortune of the Medicis should have been checked at John, and Cosmo been compelled to employ his life in founding it anew; that it should have been again arrested in Cosmo, and Lorenzo been obliged once more to recommence it; that none of them should have found time to cultivate the arts, letters, and politics?"

METROPOLITAN COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

A GENERAL court was held on Thursday week, at the Court-house, Greek-street, Soho-square. Mr. Hutton in the chair.

Several accounts and payments were ordered.

The late Fatal Cases of Cholera in Hair-Brain-court, Rosemary-lane.—Mr. Lovick, the assistant-surveyor, having been requested by the General Board of Health to cleanse Hair-Brain-court, Rosemary-lane, presented a report, giving a miserable account of the state in which he found it.

The report went on to state that the death of a woman, at No. 4, was hastened by opening a cesspool, the contents of which were thrown into a trench and buried. The whole of the houses are in a most wretched and dilapidated condition,—some appearing as if they were falling down, had no back ventilation of any kind, were exceedingly filthy, and the air was loaded with offensive effluvia. On the subject of water it was remarked that there was no supply.

"The houses, of which there are thirteen, containing thirty-two rooms, are inhabited by 137 persons. There have been recently eight cases of cholera in this court; four were fatal—four are expected to recover."

In flushing and cleansing the court, several of the men were seized with sickness, and they stated they would rather live in a sewer than in such a place. They, however, succeeded in rendering the place comparatively salubrious, for which the people expressed their thanks. The report next complained that, upon the arrival of the men with their pumps and hose upon the spot, they were unable to obtain any supply of water for upwards of four hours, in consequence of the main not being charged. It also contained observations on the evils caused by keeping pigs. Several of the commissioners—the Rev. W. Stone, in particular—expressed their abhorrence of pigs being kept in these neighbourhoods, especially as ample powers were now given, under the Nuisance Act, to effect the immediate removal of them.

The report was then received, and the court soon after adjourned.

FLOORS FOR COTTAGES.—A correspondent, anxious to improve the floors of cottages in the neighbourhood, asks for the best mode of forming "lime-ash floors." Considering the formation of cheap good floors for cottages a matter of interest, we would open the question wider, and ask for remarks on the best modes generally, from any who have considered the subject.

Miscellanea.

THE STATE OF ST. MARGARET'S CHURCH-YARD.—The article on this subject in a recent number of our paper, has brought us a pile of letters, confirmatory of its statements, and shewing the existence of so strong a feeling on the matter as to lead us to hope that alleviatory measures will be enforced. The *Times* having quoted a portion of the article in question, the Rev. Edward Repton, resident in the cloisters, has addressed to that paper a letter on the subject. The reverend gentleman says—"The paragraph in your paper to-day, taken from THE BUILDER, respecting this churchyard, will, I hope, call forth other remarks on the same subject. It is felt to be a nuisance by those who live near it, and proved to be so by medical and chemical professors who have inquired into and reported upon the subject. Why, then, is it allowed to become worse every year, or why is it allowed to continue, especially when it might be so easily remedied? If two or three paved footpaths through the churchyard were railed off, and the names of those buried under gravestones recorded on each side of the paths (if relatives required it), the intermediate spaces might be levelled and turfed, and thus form a pleasing object to the eye, while the inhabitants would be freed from this grievous inconvenience, which I could prove to you is not imaginary." Mr. Repton further points out the mischief done both to animal and vegetable life, by the sulphuretted hydrogen from the gas works. "This," he says, "the senators, whom THE BUILDER speaks of, will, by-and-bye, discover, when all the splendid gilding with which Mr. Barry is now decorating the houses of Parliament shall first have been destroyed, which soon it will be, by the noxious exhalation from the gas works."

RAILWAY COMPENSATIONS.—An inquiry was held on Thursday last week, before the Sheriff of Surrey, to award compensation to the firm of Brown, Gordon, and Dunn, residing in Gravel-lane, Southwark, for their leasehold and other interest attached to the premises which were required for the purposes of the London and South-Western Railway Company's extension to London-bridge. According to a correspondent, the claimants demanded in the whole 14,742*l.* 6s. 10d., viz.:—For lease of premises, 5,202*l.* 18s. 3d.; an additional amount alleged to be secured by the terms of the partnership, &c., 2,712*l.* 5s.; an amount to be expended upon new premises, 1,000*l.*; loss of interest on that amount, 750*l.*, removal of stock, 400*l.*, and 2,000*l.* for loss of profits on the business; and a sum of 2,676*l.* 13s. 7d. for Mr. Samuel Brown's private interest in the rental of the residence, and for the removal of some patented inventions. The parties, it appeared, had a lease, of which six years were unexpired, at 250*l.* per annum. The claim was, we understood, reduced in court to half the original amount. Several witnesses were called, and the Jury returned the following verdict:—"To the firm for damage, removal, refixing the plant, and adaptation to other premises, 750*l.*; for the lease, 300*l.*; for Mr. Brown's private interest for gas, engine, &c., 100*l.*; and for house-fixtures, &c., 344*l.* 1s., making a total of 1,394*l.* 1s."

PROVINCIAL.—The Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral have thankfully accepted the offer of various subscribers to provide a stained-glass window for the cathedral.——The pinnacle of Pelynt Church spire, says an Exeter paper, was lately struck by lightning, which scattered its granite masses in every direction, and ran through the building, doing some other damage, and boring a hole through a wall like a bullet hole.——Mr. W. Cotton, of Ivybridge, is to give to Plympton, Plymouth, and Devonport, with Stonehouse, a collection of works of art, books, &c., if deposited in a building near Sir Joshua Reynolds's birth-place at Plympton, with a curator, till the death of the donor and his wife, when 125*l.* a year will be added.——The iron trade, says a contemporary, continues ruinously low. It is stated that a discharge of 500 workmen (miners) from Dowlais is likely to take place. Rhymney works, too, are discharging a great number of men, mostly Irishmen.——The new Mill-hill Chapel, Park-row, Leeds, designed by Messrs. Bowman and Crowther, of Manchester, architects, has been completed. It is in the perpendicular style, with centre and side aisles. The north window is of stained glass by Warrington. The building is heated by hot water apparatus, and lighted by three chandeliers in the nave, and side lights in the aisles. The cost of the whole is upwards of 7,000*l.* The principal artificers engaged were Messrs. Wilson, Hillas, Mawr, Bates and Adams, Brunton, Preston, Milner, and Robinson.——A ponderous screen of plate-iron, three to four feet high, and running in one mass along the top of the four feet parapet of a bridge on the Paisley-road, near Glasgow, was lately so "beat on by the winds as if it were the mainsail of a vessel," the bridge itself meanwhile resisting all attempts at loco-motion, even while striding across a locomotive line,—that the mainsail yielded to the "atmospheric pressure" on the one hand, and the pontific resistance on the other, and came down, as put up, in the mass, killing two persons, and severely injuring a third.

PROJECTED WORKS.—Advertisements have been issued for tenders, by 1st March, for deepening, widening, and otherwise improving, 100 miles of river and drainage from Upwell to Whittlesey Mere; and by 25th January, for supplying her Majesty's Dock-yards with iron nails, tacks, tenter-hooks, rivets, and brads, for twelve months certain.

COMPETITION.—A premium of 50*l.* is offered for the approved design of an ornamental building, to be erected at Dundee Harbour, in commemoration of the landing of her Majesty there in 1844. Particulars as advertised.

WHITE ZINC *v.* WHITE LEAD.—Whatever be the merits of the question between the white paint based on zinc and that based on antimony, there can no longer be any doubt of the possibility of rendering 'white zinc' superior to white lead in permanent brilliancy of colour, although we are aware that expensive and patented processes and apparatus have been long since unavailingly tried with the view of accomplishing this desirable result. Yet, as to its greater permanency of colour, even while not prepared so as to be very brilliant, as already remarked in THE BUILDER, we have the evidence of Mr. Parkes, a practical chemist, who instituted experiments on purpose to test the comparative merits of white lead and oxide of zinc as pigments. On an invitation to professional men, we last week sent a representative to the premises of Mr. J. Geyelin, architect, and surveyor to the Vieille Montagne Zinc Mines Company, at Westminster, to witness some experiments with these pigments. Two boards, one painted with white zinc, by Mr. Geyelin, and the other with white lead, by Mr. Crase, at the request of Mr. Barry, were exposed to the fumes of sulphuretted hydrogen, one of the commonest and but too generally diffused sulliers of the purity of white paint. The white lead was at once attacked and reduced to a dark brown, while the white zinc remained as pure and brilliant as before. Other experiments were gone into with a like result, the zinc even protecting other colours from the slightest injury, while those containing white lead were quite destroyed. Doubtless the vapour of pure sulphur in a close vessel might have a different chemical action on oxide of zinc, which has the peculiar property of forming with sulphur the sulphuret of zinc, but on trial of the common vapour of sulphur, which, in fact, is sulphurous acid gas, but which is the next most likely substance, as from common fires, to chemically alter white paint, we do not find this 'white zinc' in the least affected. We may add, that we should have thought the article in question to be carbonate of zinc, but we are informed that it is pure oxide, a substance not easily got from the general ores of this country, which are sulphurets.*

* While thus at last having the prospect of not only a safer but a cheaper and more permanent and brilliant white paint, whether for mixing or otherwise, than white lead has ever been, perhaps the least pleasant reflection is, that, notwithstanding the abundance of zinc ore in this country, we are by no means likely to be able to cope with the foreign supply of such an article, either in cheapness or in purity, many of the continental ores being uncontaminated with those impurities to which our own repeated failures have been attributed, while the labour expended in their preparation is thus both lessened as well as cheapen. An importation, we perceive, of oxide of zinc, as a substitute for white lead, has just been made by steamer from Havre. It has been directed, however, by the authorities, to be charged with the *ad valorem* duty of 10 per cent. as a manufacture of zinc, being the same rate of duty as is leviable on manufactured painters' colours on importation into this country.

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